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CHURCH LEADERS URGE REALISM

Two outstanding Protestant leaders in the German Democratic Republic have urged a new realism in the approach in both German states to the German problem, and have suggested that the Seven-Point Plan proposed by Walter Ulbricht in January could form a basis for discussion. (For details of the Seven-Point Plan, see below).

In an interview with a church news service, Bishop D. Krummacher of Greifswald, who in the past has been very reserved in his attitude towards GDR Government policy, pointed out that today two distinct German states definitely exist. He said:

"In my capacity as member of the Commission for International Affairs in the World Council of Churches, I recently wrote a personal letter to the Secretariat in London asking our ecumenical friends whether the time has not come to examine, 'on a basis of common sense and good will' the Seven-Point Proposal made by Chairman Walter Ulbricht. This plan for an objective rapprochement between the people in both German states could be considered more earnestly than our West German brothers have so far done.

"In my opinion an improvement in the German question could take place if there were a resolute retreat from various political doctrines and illusionary prejudices which have now hardened. I am thinking, for example, of illusions which exist about the German states and their frontiers; states and frontiers which very definitely exist. I believe it is not a real service to humanity to overlook facts in the political sphere, whether one likes them or not, and to cultivate instead illusions which have no real basis."

Another Protestant church leader, Bishop Moritz Mitzenheim of Thuringia, speaking at an international conference of Christians in Erfurt on February 15th, stated: "I have always taken the position that negotiations should be held in order to reach an understanding between nations, and especially amongst our German people. I have always stressed that in these questions of political life, healthy common sense must be decisive. Chairman Walter Ulbricht has called for a step-by-step approach to normal relations between the two German states, and for this purpose the conclusion of an agreement of common sense and good will which would bar revenge-seeking, nuclear weapons and rearmament. Such an appeal must be supported on grounds of pure humanity. It is high time that the breeding grounds of a new war be abolished, and that peace should finally be achieved."

The Seven-Point Plan

Speaking in Berlin on January 15th this year, Walter Ulbricht, Chairman of the State Council of the GDR, made the proposals for a "pact of goodwill" between the two German states. The pact should include the following clauses:

1. **Respect for the existence of the other German state, and its political and social system. Renunciation of the use of force in any form.**
2. **Respect for the frontiers of the two German states, and renunciation of any attempt to change these frontiers.**
3. **Renunciation of the testing, possession, disposition and acquisition of nuclear weapons.**
4. **Arms stop in both German states, and further agreements on disarmament in both states.**
5. **Mutual recognition of the passports and citizenship of the two German states as a pre-condition for the normalisation of travel.**
6. **Establishment of normal sport and cultural relations.**
7. **Conclusion of a trade agreement between the governments of the two German states, with the aim of expanding trade.**

M.P. on 7 Points

Mr Emanuel Shinwell, British M.P. and Minister of Defence in the British Labour Government of 1950, stated in an interview with the East Berlin "Neues Deutschland" that the 7 point proposals made by Walter Ulbricht, possibly with some modifications, were the only basis for negotiations which might be acceptable to both sides. If West Germany refused to negotiate, Mr. Shinwell said, this would increase tension and might lead to conflicts and to a general conflagration in Europe. A solution like the one proposed by Mr Ulbricht must be accepted in the end, he added, for it was in the interests of both German states to begin negotiations promptly.

Notes on a Top Cop

By John Peet

The name of Theo Emil Saevecke does not turn up in most of the standard books on the SS and nazi crimes; his name was practically unknown until it broke into the news a few weeks ago when he was named as the Bonn police official who had organised and led the raid on the Hamburg news magazine "Spiegel" in October 1962.

Since then, fragmentary information about Saevecke's past has come to light in old nazi files and in statements made by some of his victims who survived. Here is an attempt to piece together what we know so far about this man who, after serving the nazis as a police officer in occupied Poland, Tunisia and Italy, emerged from his post-war obscurity to take one of the top jobs in Bonn's political police force.

Saevecke was born in Hamburg in 1911, the son, as he proudly declared in autobiographical notes which he submitted to the nazi authorities, of a "regular army NCO". He became interested in politics very early; at the age of 15, when he was still at school, he became leader of the local "youth group of the Rossbach Organisation" in Parchim.

The place and the organisation are of more than passing interest. The "Rossbach Organisation" was one of the pre-nazi "Free Corps", an extreme reactionary band of ex-soldiers which committed a series of brutal murders in the early twenties. Boss of the Rossbach Organisation in the little market town of Parchim at the time when young Saevecke joined it was none other than Martin Bormann, later Hitler's personal secretary, and the man who really ran Germany in the last years of Hitler's rule.

When Saevecke joined the Rossbach youth group, Bormann was a renowned local right-wing martyr; he had just come out of jail after serving a derisory sentence of one year's imprisonment for ordering the murder of a member of the organisation who had allegedly turned traitor. The man who had actually committed the murder, Rudolf Hoess, later became one of the biggest mass murderers in history, as commandant of Auschwitz Concentration Camp. Martin Bormann "looked after" Hoess at the height of his power, and got him the coveted job of concentration camp commander; it is reasonable to suppose that he also helped his young follower Saevecke in his career as a police and SS officer.

In 1928 Saevecke moved away from Parchim to Lübeck, where he joined Hitler's Storm Troops; one year later, although he had not left school yet, he became a full-blown member of the Nazi Party.

In 1930, Saevecke left school. In his autobiographical notes, found in nazi files, he states: "I left the school, which was run by Jews and Marxists, and went to sea."

In 1934, tiring of the sea, and no doubt helped by his pre-power nazi membership, he became a cadet officer in the police force, and made a rapid career, soon being transferred as an officer to the homicide squad in Berlin.

Immediately after the nazi occupation of Poland, Sievecke was attached to "Einsatzgruppe VI" and sent to Poznan, where he served for one year as Detective Commissar. Little information is yet available about his activities in Poznan, but the months following the nazi occupation were marked by mass deportations from the city of Poles and Jews, and Saevecke almost inevitably participated.

By July 1940, with a large part of Europe in nazi hands, aims were set higher, and Himmler's Reichssicherheitshauptamt (Reich Security Main Office) sent out a call for volunteers for colonial police service. Saevecke and his application were sponsored by his superior officer, who signed a testimonial stating: "Saevecke is of the highest character, and always ready for action; he is notably independent in action and tenacious. His firm political attitude is clear from his activities for National Socialism since 1928".

So off he set for his career in the not-yet-won nazi colonies, studying colonial police methods at a special course in Berlin in late 1940, and at the fascist Italian colonial police school near Rome in early 1941.

But the colonies did not appear so quickly, so Saevecke, after passing his courses with flying colours, had to kick his heels for a whole year before being appointed, in February 1942, as nazi liaison officer to the Inspector General of the Italian Colonial Police in Libya.

At this time, it will be remembered, Rommel was advancing in North Africa, and the British Eighth Army was fighting a desperate rearguard action to keep the Wehrmacht out of Egypt. To Saevecke it must have looked likely that there would soon be great colonial areas in the Middle East for him to help "pacify" in the nazi sense. No light has yet been thrown upon what he actually did in Libya, but by November of 1942 the whole picture had changed. The British Eighth Army had beaten Rommel at El Alamein, and at the other end of North Africa, US and British troops had landed in Morocco and Algeria.

In November 1942, nazi troops poured into Tunisia, and amongst them was Theo Saevecke, now in the rank of Hauptsturmführer, or Captain, of a special SS squad. His special job was the recruitment of forced labourers amongst the Jews of Tunis. The French author, Jacques Sabille, describes Saevecke's work in his book "The Jews in Tunisia" as follows: "The Committee for the Recruiting of Jewish Workers in Tunisia was controlled by two SS officers, Hauptsturmführer Saevecke and Hauptsturmführer Pohl, who were under the command of SS Standartenführer Rauff". (Rauff, recently arrested in Chile, was the man who invented the first gas-waggon for the mass execution of Jews.)

In every part of nazi-occupied Europe and Africa where the local Jewish inhabitants were driven out to forced labour there was limitless brutality and many killings, and there is no reason to suppose that the situation was any different in Tunisia. As far as is known, no Jews from Tunisia were deported to the European extermination camps, but this was only because nazi rule lasted a mere six months, and transport across the Mediterranean was difficult.

In May 1943, the allied forces drove the last nazis out of Tunisia. Amongst the nazi corpses which littered the beach at Tunis was one in the uniform of an SS officer, and this was mistakenly identified by a local Jewish doctor as the corpse of Saevecke, the hated slave-driver. As a result of this mistaken identification, Saevecke's name was not included in the French War Crimes List, since he was believed dead.

Referring to Saevecke's activities in Tunisia, the West German Ministry

of the Interior announced on February 19th this year that they were not of a nature "which would lead to disciplinary or court action against him".

In September 1943, Saevecke appeared again as one of the leading German police officials in Milan, nazi-occupied north Italy, and here he served out the remainder of the war. Dozens of Italian witnesses have testified in the past few weeks that in this capacity he murdered, tortured and deported hundreds of Jews and anti-fascists. On April 23rd 1945, two weeks before the end of the war, Saevecke ordered the murder of 16 Italian Jews; they were shot and their bodies dumped in Lake Maggiore. In late February this year, leading Milan citizens, including the Christian Democratic mayor of the city, demanded that Sievecke be tried for his crimes.

After the war, Saevecke, like so many other war criminals, disappeared from view. In the early fifties, however, he applied for reinstatement in the police. According to the West German Ministry of the Interior he made no secret of his nazi past, but this proved no obstacle, and he was soon one of the leading officials of the "Sicherungsgruppe Bonn", a small elite force of political police under the direct control of State Secretary Hans Globke, Adenauer's personal assistant.

In this capacity, Saevecke organised the Gestapo-style raid on the news magazine "Spiegel". When details of his past record became public knowledge, it was announced that he had been transferred "at his own request" from the political police to the Federal Criminal Police Force.

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Many other leading members of the Bonn Political Police have well-known nazi records. Regierungskriminalrat Joachim Kaintzik was an officer in Himmler's Sicherheitsdienst; Regierungskriminalrat Eiring was a Gestapo officer in occupied Prague; Kriminalinspektor Herbert Kosyra was a nazi police officer in occupied Katowice; Kriminalinspektor Konrad Zimmer and Kriminalinspektor Gustav Hein were members of an SS extermination squad in the occupied Soviet Union.

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Commenting on the Saevecke case, the liberal West German newspaper "Frankfurter Rundschau" stated on February 27th:

"If you ask Saevecke's superiors how it came about that a former SS Hauptsturmführer could work for years as a leading official in the Bonn Security Police, you will get the reply: 'He was a fully qualified expert'. Using this logic, Joseph Goebbels would be Chief of the Federal Press Office if he were still alive.

"The really bad thing about this case is that Saevecke's superiors, who allowed such a man to get such a post, knew about his past record ever since his appointment in 1950. They are responsible for the fact that those in the East can point to us today and say that former SS officers occupy important political positions. And these superiors have the nerve to reply 'Ah, you are using material from Eastern sources' when we ask them whether the details on Saevecke's past record are correct.

"And it is just as objectionable when Saevecke's superiors claim that he gave them very little information about his activities in Tunisia. It is not simply a question of his activities in Tunisia. Even without the Tunisian episode, Saevecke's whole career in the Third Reich is amply sufficient to make him completely unbearable as head of a political department in the senior German police force.

"The frightful thing is that the responsible people in our ministries have no feeling for this fact. But how should they understand this? Most of them were implicated in former days (in the nazi period, ed.) in one way or another. Formerly they held posts in the **Reich** Ministry of the Interior; today they hold posts in the **Federal** Ministry of the Interior: that is the only difference. They are all old pals together, not only in the Ministry of the Interior, but in other ministries too. Why on earth should they dismiss such a 'valuable' colleague as Regierungskriminalrat Saevecke?"

Doctor Quits One-Man Anti-Nazi Campaign

A West German doctor has abandoned a one-man battle to rid his town of high-placed nazis and will soon move to Sweden in the interests of his family. Dr Elmar Herterich, 37, a nerve specialist, had turned up one war criminal and ex-nazi after another in leading jobs in his Bavarian city of Würzburg; although some of the men were forced to retire, Dr Herterich could no longer cope with the wave of intimidation and pressure which climaxed in a four-month libel sentence against him in mid-February.

In 1961, during a minor property case he was involved in, the doctor discovered collusion between a city official and the president of the Würzburg Administrative Court in quashing his case against the official. Checking on the two men, he found that the city official had been deputy mayor of Würzburg under the nazis and was drawing a monthly pension of 1600 marks (£145) because of it, while Judge Rudolf Schiedermair, the court president, had been an SS judge in occupied Norway, where he had served 25 months of a war crimes sentence.

Dr Herterich submitted details of his research to the Bavarian Interior Ministry, and when no action was taken, he published the facts in a pamphlet of his own, which also criticised the Bavarian officials for hushing up the matter. Soon after this pamphlet appeared, Würzburg's state prosecutor Karl Kolb had Dr Herterich's house searched for alleged "communist literature".

Soon Dr Herterich found that Karl Kolb also was involved in war crimes; he has been charged with the killing of a Polish woman and two Polish priests during the nazi occupation in Poland. The more the doctor probed, the more dirt came to the surface. He found that Georg Eisert, director of the city's provincial court, which was now dealing with numerous charges and countercharges of libel involving him, had been a Deputy Public Prosecutor in the central nazi "People's Court" and had superintended the execution of dozens of anti-nazi Belgians, Dutchmen and Frenchmen.

Finally he found that Würzburg's Mayor Helmuth Zimmerer had written a doctor's thesis during the nazi period which had enthusiastically endorsed Hitler's whole programme, especially his racialism.

His one-man campaign was answered by a wave of harassment and intimidation, including threatening letters and telephone calls telling his wife, who is of Jewish origin, "we forgot to gas you". His home has been stoned and his wife arrested for not paying a 200 mark bill promptly. In one of the libel cases lodged against him he was given a suspended four-month prison sentence and a 100 mark fine. The verdict officially denied that his exposures had been in the public interest because there was allegedly no evidence "that public opinion approved his actions". Calling this reasoning "a completely nazi legal principle",

Dr Herterich said he owes it to his family to leave West Germany as soon as he can wind up the last of his court cases.

The city of Würzburg achieved notoriety only last July when its city council refused to honour one of its most famous sons, the late novelist Leonhard Frank, because he had described in one of his books how the nazis had murdered many of the town's Jews during the 1930's.

The Herterich case has already caused repercussions which, together with recent scandals of a similar nature, indicate that not only Würzburg but the whole administration of Bavaria and other provinces is riddled with former nazis who make it a regular practice to help each other and protect each other from exposure.

After the exposure of the city's mayor, a Social Democratic member of the City Council resigned his office in protest because the chairman of the Social Democratic fraction in the council continued to support the mayor.

"TIMES" ROASTS BERLIN FILM

"The Times", London, made the following comments on the American horror propaganda film "Escape from East Berlin" in a film criticism on March 1st:

'Nothing about this film is credible. Although every sequence tells us that we are in East Berlin, a tragically cut-off part of a city in which the people are longing to escape, we never believe it ... What went wrong? Three things. First, the film's success depends on an audience accepting the premise that all Germans are now good Germans and all Russians bad Russians. Secondly ... there is no real indication why the East Berlin family should want to escape from its pleasant apartment. Thirdly, the family is made up of stock types, including an endearingly comical uncle, an endearingly stupid Hausfrau and a glamorous daughter who longs for hot baths and soft carpets. A pretty moronic lot, however lovingly presented. It hardly helps that the escape ringleader (Mr Don Murray) has no real wish to leave his home. Clearly he finds East Berlin satisfactory. And as he seems the most intelligent member of his family, one is inclined to dismiss its desire to run away as a Chekhovian restlessness – or at best, as a sporting instinct to get beyond the wall because it is there."

GDR Production Rises Despite Difficulties

Industrial production in the GDR rose by over 6% in 1962, the official Plan Report for the year, published on February 21st, showed. The report also pointed up some weak spots and industries which had not achieved plan fulfillment.

Labour productivity, which rose by 8.4%, was the key factor for greater advances in the future, the report stressed. More money had been spent on scientific research and technological changes than in previous years, and a beginning had been made in the big campaign to catch up and overtake foreign producers in quality and modernity of industrial products.

In agriculture, 1962 showed a big increase over 1961 in nearly all crops. The grain crop jumped from 4,842,000 tons in 1961 to 5,936,000 tons in 1962, and the potato harvest increased from 8,430,000 tons to 13,284,000 tons. The apparent improvement was misleading, however, since it meant in most cases that crops were back to normal after the disastrous harvest of 1961, caused by very bad weather.

The sub-standard harvest of 1961 was still having serious effects on animal husbandry, however; fodder shortages meant that the numbers of cattle, pigs and poultry were down below 1961 levels, and the production of meat, eggs and milk products had suffered accordingly. More food had to be imported, and this meant that imports of raw materials and industrial equipment had to be cut. With the big increase in fodder crops in 1962, the situation would improve in 1963, the plan report stated.

Consumer goods sales rose steadily in 1962; as usual, the number of TV set owners showed the biggest increase. 1.9 million homes, about one-third of the total, now have television sets. The number of refrigerators and washing machines also went up; about one family in eight now own these conveniences.

Although the construction industry just missed its plan target, achieving 99.4%, a large number of new plants were constructed or enlarged and 87,200 flats were occupied by their new tenants.

The report also covered social and cultural improvements. New kindergartens with room for 19,900 children in the 3–6 age group raised the total kindergarten capacity to 392,000, just under half the total number of children in this age group. The number of places in nurseries (for babies up to 3 years) rose to 108,000.

77% of all children finishing their 8th class in school (average age 14) continued on to at least one or two further years of education. There were also 273,000 students at colleges and universities, of which about 95% received stipends covering all or nearly all basic expenses. About 1 million working people went to courses at evening school or in the relatively young "factory and village academies".

Bonn Names New Nazi Prosecutor

The West German Government named a new Federal Procurator General at the end of February, to replace Wolfgang Fraenkel who was sacked in July last year when details of his past record became known. The newly appointed Procurator General, top government prosecutor, is Dr Ludwig Martin, who also held a top post in the nazi legal system.

Commenting on the new appointment, Dr H. G. van Dam, General Secretary of the Jewish Central Council in West Germany, stated on February 27th: "Dr Martin, too, made himself a fine career during the nazi period of injustice. In 1939 Martin worked as an official in the office of the Reich Prosecutor; his appointment to this post at the early age of 30 meant that the nazis regarded him as a reliable man." Dr van Dam called upon the West German authorities to consider the new appointment very carefully before making it final.

Pressure Politics

West German Foreign Ministry spokesmen threatened to "re-examine West German relations with Ghana and even the granting of development help" because of charges in Ghanaian newspapers on West German neo-colonialist policies in Africa. Among the charges which angered Bonn diplomats most was that West German arms were being used by Portugal to suppress the independence movement in Angola. West Germany has been making many similar threats to African and Asian countries which have criticised West Germany or taken a stand on German questions differing from the official Bonn views.

Home from West Germany

By Dr K. H. Gerstner

Every week this year approximately 200 people have moved to the GDR from West Germany or West Berlin; many are coming to live here for the first time but others are people who left the GDR in past years and have now decided to return. The following article on two "returnees" is reprinted, in slightly condensed, form, from the "Berliner Zeitung", East Berlin.

Near Berlin in the little town of Blankenfelde there is a reception centre for people coming to the GDR from West Germany, and it is as full as ever this year. During a visit there recently I met the Neumanns, a young couple originally from the GDR, who had returned here after two years in West Germany. During the days spent checking on their background, they lived in a clean, warm room in the centre. That is where we sat while Herr Neumann, 20-year-old radio mechanic, told me about their experiences in West Germany.

Erich Neumann is a pleasant young man with fair hair and lively, alert eyes; his wife Heidi, a pretty brunette, is still rather unsettled, especially as she is uncertain how her life will be in the future. The third member of the family is tow-haired little Michael, who was born last summer in Stuttgart, West Germany.

When Erich and Heidi left their home town of Perleberg in the early summer of 1961, he was a member of a cooperative of radio repairmen and she was a salesgirl in a nationally-owned retail shop. They were not married yet, but very much in love. "Do you know how much you've missed of the growth of your co-operative, Herr Neumann?" "Yes, my parents have written me about it." "Why did you leave the GDR?"

There was a pause. "I'm afraid I can't give you any sensible reason", Erich said. "While we were sitting for weeks in a refugee camp in West Germany, separated from each other, we began to regret our step, but as you know, nobody likes admitting he made a mistake."

Their life in West Germany did not get off to a good start. They were separated for months because they could not both find jobs in the same town. He worked for a firm in Altena, Westphalia, she was a waitress in Hanover. Finally they came together in Stuttgart; he worked in a branch of the same firm and she got a job as waitress and maid in a small hotel. "Added together, our earnings were not bad, but we never had anything over. Here in the GDR people have no idea of the prices over there. Our furnished room in a suburb of Stuttgart cost us 115 marks (over £10) a month. It was a garret room. There were two beds, a wardrobe, a table, two chairs and nothing else. We had to go out in the hall to wash as there was no basin or water in the room."

(In the GDR, 115 marks' rent would pay for a small house, or in East Berlin, would cover the best centrally-heated three-room flat with bath, kitchen and other amenities).

"Erich, show him one of the receipts you brought with you," Heidi said. He took it out and added, "It's a pity that I didn't bring the lease along, too. There were a dozen things we could or could not do. Rent had to be paid by the third of the month or we would be evicted. No other furniture could be brought into the room. No children could be brought in. No noise, etc., etc."

"And the rent didn't even include the heating," Heidi added.

"No, we had to pay extra for fuel and electricity. We had to buy coal ourselves, 7.50 marks for a hundredweight of coal. That was the summer price. The winter price is much higher."

(Household coal prices in the GDR vary from about 2 marks to nearly 5 marks).

"And then we had to travel by tram for three-quarters of an hour into town to work – that cost 70 pfennigs for one trip. (Most tram trips in the GDR cost 15 or 20 pfennigs, ed.) I worked in an average restaurant, where several mid-day lunches were offered, ranging up to 12 marks in price."

"I don't think we have such a price in the whole GDR," I interrupted.

"No," Heidi Neumann answered, "the restaurant prices are higher over there. All prices in West Germany are very steep. When our son was born, the delivery cost us 390 marks (about £35). Here are the bills – 17.70 marks in hospital fees per day, although it was only the third class, 60 marks for the midwife, and then 5 marks a day for the baby and other charges."

"Here in the GDR you wouldn't have had to pay out a pfennig, in fact, you would have received a grant of 500 marks. Didn't the health insurance fund pay your expenses?"

"Not a pfennig. They only said, 'Why didn't you have your baby at home?' Yet we paid high rates for our health insurance."

Herr Neumann showed me a monthly slip. From wages of 544 marks (about £50) he had deduc-

Without Comment

"The net loss of population by migration from Scotland in the year to June, 1962, is estimated at 29,500."

("The Times", London, February 21st)

"A report on the emigration of scientists from Britain shows that the annual rate of permanent emigration of those holding Ph. D. degrees ... represents about 12% of output. The number permanently emigrating has roughly trebled in 10 years ... The two most important factors contributing to emigration are probably the greater speed with which a young married scientist may expect to own a home and car in the United States and, secondly, the greater facilities for research ... Reasons given by individuals for emigration are as varied as for any other class of emigrant – and not all of them appear sensible."

("The Times", London, February 21st)

"Scientists are being lured away (from West Germany). In this decade the USA needs nearly 100,000 engineers more than it is producing itself – American firms are hunting talents in Europe."

("Die Welt", Hamburg, February 20th)

"Emigration from Britain – to Australia in particular – is booming. A spokesman at Australia House said: 'During January we had applications covering 33,767 men, women and children'. New Zealand House said: 'We've been inundated with enquiries ... the figure jumped to 700 daily at the end of January."

("The Observer", London, February 17th)

tions of 70.60 marks for health insurance, 60.50 marks income tax and 6.15 marks church tax. "I never got much more than 400 marks net."

"As a waitress I received no pay, but only a percentage and tips," Heidi Neumann said. "The service didn't cost the owner a single pfennig. And I had to pay for my lunch at the regular price. I only had one Sunday free every six weeks, and work days from 10 in the morning till midnight were no exception. When I couldn't work any longer shortly before the baby came, the manager demanded that I pay 10 marks a day for my little room in the hotel. That's when we decided to take the furnished room instead. We had to put Michael into a church-run nursery, where we could only visit him for one hour every week. There were 20 children in one room there. That was very difficult for me," Heidi said, "after all, I wanted to look after my baby myself. I was often homesick for my home in Perleberg and for my parents."

"The strangest thing was when we wanted to get married. They told us that we were still minors, can you imagine? I've been working for three years, in the GDR you're no longer a minor when you reach 18, and in West Germany they treated us like children."

There was a short pause. I did some figuring and made comparisons. When people compare prices for consumer goods in the GDR and West Germany, they very often forget to compare the basic rates of rent, utilities and other necessities. "Did you take any holiday trips during the two years?"

"Quite impossible. We were happy if we could pay our bills at the end of each month. But we have been talking only about rents, rates and prices, and that isn't the most important thing at all. That isn't why we came home. We never felt at home there, and we never had any real friends. The people there are so different from here." Erich searched for the right words. "Everything is tied up with money. People don't think about things. It's as if there were nothing in life but money. Whoever has money acts like a big shot; whoever doesn't have money doesn't amount to anything. They would sell their own grandmothers if they could make money on the deal. That's really the way it is, I'm not exaggerating. Nobody helps the next man. I was even disappointed in my relatives over there. Me – me – me. That's all they ever think about. That's the West. It was a strange world for us."

"We were homesick," Heidi said.

"In the GDR we had heard about the "Path from 'Me' to 'Us'", you know how much was written about that. I always thought that was a lot of empty phrases. I didn't take it at all seriously in those days. But now I know that there is something to it. I know now where I really belong. It was a rather difficult way for us to learn this lesson, but I am glad I learned it. No-one can ever tell me anything about the 'Golden West' any more."

"All that glitters isn't gold," Heidi added.

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I saw Heidi and Erich Neumann again in their home town of Perleberg the day before yesterday. They had gone straight to Heidi's parents. Her father and mother were having tea when there was a knock on the door, and they could hardly say a word when they saw who the three visitors were. That was a joyful reunion, and the little grandson made an especially big hit with his grandparents.

The Neumanns have already settled down quite well in the week since their return to Perleberg. Erich got a job immediately as an electrician in a nearby plant. Two other electricians who work with him showed him around his new place of work. "This is a different atmosphere altogether. I felt right at home after the first hour," Erich said.

They were also allocated a two-room flat. I visited it; it is not luxurious, but they are happy to have their own home at last. "What rent will you pay?" "23 marks! For the money we paid out in West Germany in one month for a furnished room, we can pay the rent here for five months for a complete two room flat with kitchen."

They have decided to stay with Heidi's parents until the cold spell is over and they have been able to purchase the most necessary furniture. But they have already bought a modern kitchen set. "Where did you get the money so quickly?" I asked. "There was still money due me from my cooperative for work I did before I left. They had paid it into a blocked account, which was unblocked when I returned. It was very decent of them.

"We were really treated in a very friendly way by everyone. Frankly, we didn't expect that at all. There were no difficulties of any kind. We were not even hauled over the coals by anyone. At the District Council they were pleasant; of course, I don't mean that they welcomed us with open arms. They told us we had done the right thing coming home, and said that they would help us to get settled again. We were given the flat, I got my job and we will also get a financial credit. Later I will be able to re-join my cooperative. Heidi plans to work again, too, but first she wants to get the new flat in order. If they knew in West Germany how people who return are treated here, many of them would come back, but they are told all kinds of horror stories."

We sat in the warm, comfortable living-room of Heidi's parents and drank a glass of wine to the happy return and the good beginnings here. "We're back home again, cheers!" said Heidi beaming. Michael stood in his new play-pen and looked at the jolly group with his big eyes. Some day he will be a useful citizen of the GDR.

Common Clover for Comecon

Agricultural experts from eight socialist countries met in Sofia from February 19th to 22nd to work out plans for cooperation for the eight years till 1970. The meeting, in the framework of the Council for Mutual Economic Aid (COMECON), agreed to organise joint poultry farms, to specialise production of top-grade clover and other seed, and to coordinate trade in seed potatoes. The meeting also made decisions regarding veterinary problems, agricultural mechanisation and crop protection.

The meeting, which was also attended by observers from China and Vietnam, was one of a stepped-up series of economic sessions in all fields amongst the socialist countries aimed at accelerating cooperation and specialisation as rapidly as possible during the years ahead.

Power Plant Produces

The huge power plant of Lübbenau, 50 miles south of Berlin, generated its first electricity for the country's power system on February 25th. Its present capacity of 651,000 kilowatts will be more than doubled when the plant is finally completed, making it one of the largest thermal power plants in Europe. Together with its sister power plant of Vetschau seven miles away, which is scheduled to begin operation in September, the power complex will generate more electricity than all power plants together on present GDR territory in the peak pre-war year of 1936.

Who Stops Visits?

By Bill Rogers

The Earl of Dundee, speaking in the British House of Lords some weeks ago, blamed the Berlin Wall for the decision not to let theatre groups like East Berlin's Berliner Ensemble visit Britain. "We know the Berliner Ensemble is a great company and we regret that the theatre-going public here should not have a chance to see its performances," said the Earl, who is Minister of State in the Foreign Office. "But it is the general policy of NATO at present not to grant facilities to East German applicants in this category. This policy is to draw attention to the inhuman nature of the Berlin wall which the East German authorities erected in August 1961."

The Earl of Dundee may think what he likes about the GDR frontier in Berlin, commonly known as "The Wall." But calendars are stubborn, and a search through old newspapers shows that discrimination against GDR visitors to Britain started much earlier than August 1961, when the frontier through Berlin took its present form.

On March 12th 1961, five months before the wall was erected, Lord Boothby wrote in the London "Sunday Telegraph": "By and large the (British) government have been refusing visas to the East Germans who wished to come to this country to see what we could do and to place orders. And, in the comparatively rare cases when visas have been granted, they have been prefixed with the insulting stamp 'presumed to be German'. As a result, our own industrialists have been obliged to fight their way into East Germany as best they could, and negotiate on the spot.

"'How come,' I asked. The answer was unequivocal. Pressure from the West German Government, in Bonn, was the unanimous reply."

Even earlier, on November 15th 1960, Mr G. B. Drayson, Conservative M. P. for Skipton, criticised the British visa policy in the House of Commons.

"The subject I wish to raise tonight is that of restrictions now being placed on East German businessmen and technicians wishing to visit this country ... I always thought it was our policy to remove travel restrictions wherever possible, but I now find that, since September, and even before then, travel between this country and East Germany has been restricted for businessmen who wish to come to this country ...

"In June this year I visited an agricultural fair in Leipzig. A great deal of interest was shown in two Aberdeen Angus cattle ... which were being exhibited there. Following this an invitation was received from the Royal Agricultural Society to visit the Royal Agricultural Show at Cambridge, and I was told that the East Germans intended to spend at least £250,000 on British livestock, seeds and agricultural equipment. But no visas were forthcoming ... The same thing applies to steel ...

"Hon. Members may have noticed that on Saturday the 'Economist' referred to this as 'embargo by passport' and said that it stops trade visits and that it may well stop orders being placed ...

"I find that this ban is not confined only to trade but extends to sport as well. That, I think, is most distasteful to any Englishman."

Mr Drayson went on to list a football team which was barred from playing in a cup match in Belfast, a film producer and actress who were barred from a film festival in London, and champion motor cycle riders who were prevented from attending a motor cycle show, all long before the Berlin Wall was erected.

On December 15th, 1960, in another incident of this kind, the GDR journalist Dr Franz Krahl was forced to leave Britain after nearly a year there as foreign correspondent because of the refusal to renew his work permit. The British Foreign Office and Home Office admitted that there were no complaints about Dr Krahl, but switched the blame to the Allied Travel Office in Berlin. Although Dr Krahl had taken an active part in the defence of Britain during the war after losing all members of his family to nazi terror, the British authorities said that they could make no exceptions.

In April 1961 Albert Norden, an important political leader of the GDR, was refused a visa by the British Government. Professor Norden, who had also been persecuted by the nazis and nearly all whose relatives had died at Auschwitz and other death camps, stated bitterly at the time: "I have not got the same sort of qualifications as nazi generals like Speidel and Heusinger, who never have any difficulty in visiting Britain."

In 1960, two top scientists from the GDR, invited to the 300th anniversary celebration of the Royal Society, were prevented from flying to Britain at the last minute due to the same visa problems.

The Earl of Dundee put the blame for the British visa policy on the "inhumanity of the Berlin Wall". Before there was a wall, other reasons were given. Most observers agree with what Lord Boothby was told by British industrialists: The real reason for visa restrictions is that West Germany has brought massive pressure to bear on Britain and other NATO governments in its long campaign to isolate the GDR diplomatically, culturally and even in the field of sports.

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BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By Allen Mann

Next week there will be an interesting little meeting in our neighbourhood: all residents are invited to look at models of three statues. They will then express their views as to which one should be set up among the future lawns and shrubbery in what is becoming East Berlin's largest housing project.

The neighbourhood is very much in the public eye, for it lines in some depth both sides of the city's main avenue, the Karl Marx Allee. The several thousand new apartments and shops, some completed, and others still going up, are becoming East Berlin's show window.

The whole area used to be a slum, with small factories cramped in amongst old tenements, until it was smashed thoroughly by air raids. The rubble was cleared away after the war, but little else was done and it remained an eye-sore for years, while construction moved ahead further out from the centre of the city.

The big new apartment buildings are eight and ten storeys tall. They are being built with pre-fabricated sections already including the ready-to-open windows and the exterior of special tiles, at first all in a uniform cream-white colour but now including light yellow, green and blue tones which add a note of variety. Since each pre-fab section is the height and width of a room, and since a big crane and a few men can do the construction easily and efficiently, it only takes a few weeks to put up the buildings (with 70 to 120 homes each). Unfortunately, the rest of the job has not been modernised so well, and months pass before the plumbers, electricians, carpenters and paper hangers are finished with the insides.

When finished, the apartments are very pleasant and comfortable. Ours has three large, sunny rooms with a small practical kitchen and bath and lots of cupboards, drawers and other closet space. Most important of all, the new buildings are heated centrally from one big heating plant.

Most homes in the GDR are still heated by the traditional big tile ovens in each room. The ovens heat very evenly but they are an awful bother. Briquets must be hauled up from the cellar for them, kindling must be at hand, and ashes must be disposed of at least several times a week. Many people are experts, but it always took me about three tries to make a fire at all and, often enough when I wasn't watching, even the third try would go out. So I was very grateful for central heating, even though it sent our rent up to 120 marks a month (about £10), a very high rate for the GDR, but low by western standards.

Since the building I am in was the first of the new project here, we had to wait for many of the neighbourhood conveniences (as a matter of fact, we had to wait two months for the elevator to start running). But now, from our window, we see a whole series of them going up. First, there was the long school building, where our son has been going since last autumn. Soon a new gymnasium and swimming pool will be added, as well. Just behind our building is a blue kindergarten and an orange-coloured day nursery, for the children above and below three years of age respectively. Both are reserved for children of working mothers, and both have large adjoining areas for the children to play in the fresh air.

Another recent addition is the "ambulatorium", a very handsome out-patient clinic. Unless troubled by severe pains of one kind or another, it has always been a pleasure for me to go to the doctor or dentist in the GDR and get full treatment without paying a penny. Now the pleasure is even greater, for the frequent dingy waiting-room atmosphere is missing from this yellow-tiled and modern building.

Then there is the big self-service market with its special fish store, dairy and shop for hardware and household utensils. We still prefer buying fresh bread and rolls in the little private bakery around the corner, but we can get everything else at the publicly-owned market. Next door is a shop taking on objects to be cleaned or repaired, ranging from shirts and shoes to curtains and umbrellas. The planners also included a friendly pub, a small restaurant and a "National Front" clubhouse for meetings on political, cultural or other topics.

These services are for the residents of the new neighbourhood. Along the central Karl Marx Allee more impressive buildings are being completed for the public at large. The biggest will be a new blue hotel, 13 storeys high. This will fill an awful gap, for the many out of town visitors to East Berlin have always had trouble finding a room, and ancient hostelries had to be kept going long beyond their proper life span. Just the other week I spoke with two Americans living at the famous old Adlon Hotel, or what little has remained of it. They complained that not only did they have difficulties with the elevator but that, for the first time in a life of travel, they had been put in a hotel room which had **only** hot water.

Next to the hotel will be a modern cinema combined with, of all things, a public library. Across Karl Marx Allee a new restaurant (with dancing) is being completed, and along the avenue in both directions, in front of the big new houses, a café-soda fountain, an art shop and clothing stores of all kinds are being erected, with large plate-glass windows framed in the coloured tiles which are the keynote of the area.

The end of the avenue turns into East Berlin's central Alexander Platz, and from here there is a connection with Marx-Engels Platz and the famous Unter den Linden boulevard, ending at the West Berlin frontier. The last ruins along this stretch are finally being carted away, and cranes or scaffolding dominate much of the scene. Modern buildings will gradually take their place, not too daring architecturally, perhaps, but straightforward and simple and appropriate to their surroundings, which will include a large number of lawns and trees.

The GDR and its capital have waited a long time till the urgent needs for industrial construction and housing could be covered by the short supplies of building materials and labour power. They have not yet been met fully by any means, and many problems remain, but more and more cities are now at last being rejuvenated and modernised. Perhaps the long wait will pay off in the end in terms of well-planned, uncrowded and pleasant cities.

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To turn to quite another subject, there is an odd historical footnote to the sensational kidnapping of the French OAS leader Colonel Argoud at the end of February from a hotel in Munich. Hitler nearly bought the hotel, the Hotel Eden near Munich railway station, just forty years ago to serve as nazi headquarters; the negotiations for the purchase broke down when he discovered that the men who wanted to put up the money for him were Free Masons, whom he regarded as only slightly less objectionable than Jews.

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